

**Listing of Claims:**

1 -10. (Canceled).

11. (Currently Amended) A service element that belongs to a distributed system in a motor vehicle as a component, the distributed system further including other components that are independent of one another and interconnected by a bus, the service element comprising:

a processing device disposed in the motor vehicle and adapted to perform operations including the operations of:

configuring the other components;

maintaining the other components;

performing an error diagnosis of software running on the other components, and, if the software on one of the other components has an error, correcting that software;

allowing a remote ~~testing and~~ diagnosis of the other components of the distributed system to be carried out, wherein the remote diagnosis includes testing at least one of the other components; and

performing an emergency function.

12. (Previously Presented) The service element according to claim 11, wherein the processing device is further adapted to perform the operations of:

detecting a new component and for integrating the new component into the distributed system; and

operating a display device to represent information about a configuration.

13. (Canceled).

14. (Previously Presented) The service element according to claim 11, wherein at least one of the maintaining operation and the correcting operation includes communicating with a communication element for loading new software for the other components.

15. (Canceled).

16. (Previously Presented) The service element according to claim 11, wherein the processing device is further adapted to perform the operations of :

communicating with a communications element for, in the case of a serious functional error, contacting a service provider.

17. (Previously Presented) The service element according to claim 11, wherein the processing device is further adapted to perform the operations:

operating a display to transfer information about the distributed system to a user of the distributed system.

18. (Previously Presented) The service element according to claim 11, wherein the processing device is further adapted to perform the operations of:

checking newly loaded software in accordance with a predetermined value.

19. (Currently Amended) A distributed system, comprising:

a bus; and

components connected by the bus, the components being independent of each other and being disposed in a motor vehicle, one of the components being a service element that includes:

a processing device adapted to perform operations, the operations including:  
configuring the other components,  
maintaining the other components,  
performing an error diagnosis of software running on the other components,  
and, if the software on one of the other components has an error, correcting that software;

allowing a remote ~~testing and~~ diagnosis of the other components of the distributed system to be carried out, wherein the remote diagnosis includes testing at least one of the other components; and

performing an emergency function.

20. (Previously Presented) The distributed system according to claim 19, wherein:  
at least one of the other components includes a communication element.

21. (Previously Presented) The service element according to claim 14, wherein the communications element includes a transceiver station communicating over a radio channel.

22. (Previously Presented) The service element according to claim 11, wherein the error diagnosis is performed at a predefined time interval.

23. (Previously Presented) The service element according to claim 11, wherein the bus includes one of an electrical wiring system, an optical wiring system, and a radio based system.

24-25. (Canceled).

26. (New) A service element that belongs to a distributed system in a motor vehicle as a component, the distributed system further including other components that are independent of one another and interconnected by a bus, the service element comprising:

a processing device disposed in the motor vehicle and adapted to perform operations including the operations of:

automatically, and at predefined intervals, performing an error diagnosis of software running on the other components;

for each of a first subset of errors diagnosed in the error diagnosis step, repair the error; and

for each of a second subset of errors diagnosed in the error diagnosing step, contact a provider and allow the provider to responsively remotely repair the error.